

appears a letter on the subject, by the Rev. Dr. Hanna, Son-in-law and Biographer of the late Dr. Chalmers, and colleague to Dr. Guthrie. We are induced to give an extract, because it both indicates great liberality of sentiment and gives honour to whom honour is due, in the person of Mr Cairns.]

If, indeed, it be true, as we fear it must be acknowledged to be, that in the ministry of the Free Church—out of our Professors' chairs—we have not one who stands out conspicuous among us thoroughly and at all points qualified for this chair, the best course for us is to take one of the very ablest of our younger ministers, to put him into the chair, and let him qualify himself in the course of his occupancy of it. And that is what the Church, with a wisdom which we are not disposed to challenge, is to be called upon to do. But surely it were a far better thing if we could lay our hand upon a man in all respects pre-eminently qualified. And if we cannot find such within our own borders, let us go a single, and that a very short step, without them, and we find in Mr. Cairns the very man we want. He is known to have given himself for years to this special branch of study. He is known to be a first-rate Greek and Hebrew scholar; he reads German as he reads English. He has made himself acquainted with Continental literature in all its branches, but especially in that which bears upon the interpretation of the sacred writings. To that critical study of the Holy Scriptures to which he has consecrated his life, he has brought powers and attainments which must have won for him the foremost place in any other intellectual field. As a logician, a metaphysician, a theologian, he stands, this moment, without a rival of his own age in Scotland. He is the man of all others to whom we look with greatest hope that he will enrich with original contributions the Biblical literature of our country. With liberty to range over the whole land were the most competent judges asked to fix upon the person by age, by talent, by scholarship, by impulsive power, the best fitted to occupy our Chair of Exegesis, there cannot be a doubt that they would fix at once upon Mr. Cairns. Why, then, should our Church not have entertained at least the project of securing for her students the services of such a man, and winning for herself the honour of his association with one of her colleges? It would have been at once a grateful and a graceful act to have put that chair of ours in his offer. It might perhaps be regarded as going beyond the truth were we to assert that two of our former Professors in the New College owe the chairs they now so honourably fill in our metropolitan University to Mr. Cairns. But no one can forget the generous aid he rendered both in the canvass which preceded their election; and it is within the truth to say, that both stand more indebted to him than to any other, or all other of their friends. In advocating as he did their claims, he showed that broad and catholic spirit by which he is so remarkably characterized. And would it not have been a most becoming thing if in the same spirit we had now offered this chair to him. Had he chosen to stand himself for either of the two chairs into which he helped to put others, his claims would I believe, have been regarded by the electors as paramount. It was no slight temptation to any literary man to have the successorship to Sir William Hamilton within his reach. But the honours, the emoluments, the reputation which he twice had but to put forth his hand to grasp, Mr. Cairns has put aside for no higher earthly prospect than an ill-paid and comparatively obscure position in the Church to which he belongs. He has done so deliberately, and because he has resolved to consecrate his life and labours to the defence and illustration of the truth as it is in Jesus. I question if in our day any nobler sacrifice has been offered at the shrine of the Christian faith. It was in our power to have placed him who gave that pledge and token of his allegiance to Christ in a position to realize more fully than he may ever be able otherwise to do, the great object of his life; for who can doubt that, had we without division or discussion (and otherwise it would neither have been for us to offer nor for him to accept) tendered this post to him, gratified by such a mark of confidence in one of her ministers, the U. P. Church would have arranged it so that her students as well as ours should have received the benefit of his instructions. In such a position, sustained by the confidence of both Churches, surrounded by a large band of aspiring youth, the opportunity would have been given to Mr. Cairns to have created a new era in the history of Biblical studies in Scotland. And with his brilliant reputation, and varied scholarship, with a soundness in the faith beyond all possibility of suspicion, and with that genial, social, impulsive sympa-